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Appointing the Investigation Board

Before an accident investigation can actually begin, the appointing official must conduct a number of activities, including selecting and briefing the investigation board. These activities are discussed below.

3.1 Establishing the Accident Investigation Board and Its Authority

Upon notification of an accident requiring a Type A or Type B investigation, the appointing official selects the accident

investigation board chairperson and three to six other board members, one of whom must be a DOE accident investigator. A list of prospective chairpersons who meet minimum qualifications is available from the Program Manager. The Program Manager also maintains a list of qualified members, consultants, advisors, and support staff, including particular areas of expertise for potential board members or consultants/advisors. The selected chairperson can help identify and select board members and others needed to conduct the investigation. In selecting these individuals, the appointing official follows the criteria defined in DOE Order 225.1, which are shown in Table 3-1.

Table 3-1. Board members must meet these criteria.

Role	Qualifications
Chairperson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Senior DOE manager ■ Demonstrated managerial competence, preferably a member of the Senior Executive Service ■ Knowledgeable of DOE accident investigation techniques ■ Experienced in conducting accident investigations through participation in at least one Type A or Type B investigation
Board Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ DOE employee ■ Subject matter expertise in areas related to the accident ■ At least one board member must be experienced as a DOE accident investigator, having participated in at least one Type A or Type B accident investigation
Board Member or Advisor/Consultant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Knowledgeable in evaluating management systems, the adequacy of policy and its implementation, and the execution of line management oversight ■ Industry working knowledge in the analytical techniques used to determine accident causal factors

DOE Order 225.1 establishes some additional restrictions concerning the selection of board members and chairpersons. No member shall have:

- A supervisor-subordinate relationship with another board member
- Any conflict of interest or direct or line management responsibility for day-to-day operation or management of the facility, area, or activity involved in the accident.

Consultants, advisors, and support staff can be assigned to assist the board where necessary, particularly when DOE employees with necessary skills are not available. For example, advisory staff may be necessary to provide knowledge of management systems or organizational concerns or expertise on specific DOE policies. A dedicated and experienced administrative coordinator (see Appendix C) is recommended. The Program Manager can help identify appropriate personnel to support accident investigation boards.

The appointing official establishes the accident investigation board within three calendar days of the accident by issuing an appointment memorandum. This written authorization establishes the board's authority and includes the scope of the investigation, the names of the individuals being appointed to the board, a specified completion date for the final report, and any special provisions deemed appropriate.

The scope of the investigation includes:

- Gathering facts
- Analyzing facts and evidence
- Developing conclusions
- Identifying judgments of need related to DOE and contractor organizations and management systems that could or should have prevented the accident
- Reviewing all organizational levels up to and beyond the level of the appointing official.

3.2 Briefing the Board

The appointing official is responsible for briefing all board members as soon as possible (within three days) after their appointment to ensure that they clearly understand their roles and responsibilities. This briefing may be given via videoconference or teleconference. If it is impractical to brief the entire board, at least the board chairperson should receive the briefing and then convey the contents of the briefing to the other board members before starting the investigation. The briefing provides the board with an understanding of:

- The scope of the investigation
- The board's authority to examine DOE and contractor organizations and management systems as possible root causes of an accident, up to and beyond the level of the appointing official
- The necessity for avoiding conflicts of interest
- Application of the safety management template to the investigative process¹
- Special concerns of the appointing official based on site accident patterns or other considerations.

¹ The safety management template reflects criteria for meeting applicable guiding principles of safety management in DOE operations. The guiding principles of safety management are identified by the Secretary of Energy in an October 1994 letter to the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board, and subsequently to Congress. There are five guiding principles identified in the Secretary's letter: line management responsibility for safety, comprehensive requirements, competence commensurate with responsibilities, independent oversight, and enforcement. The first three are applicable to management systems related to accident investigations. The safety management template, which lists criteria for each of these three guiding principles, is provided in Appendix D.

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Upon notification of an accident requiring an investigation, the appointing official selects the board chairperson and board members and briefs them before they begin the investigation.
- Board chairpersons and members must meet the experience and qualification criteria defined in DOE Order 225.1.
- The appointing official establishes the board's authority in the appointment memorandum.
- The scope of the investigation includes developing conclusions and judgments of need related to DOE and contractor organizations and management systems up to and beyond the level of the appointing official.